DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 335 165 PS 019 935

AUTHOR Francis, Connie M.
TITLE Middle Childhood: 4-H Child Development Project.
INSTITUTION Nebraska Univ., Lincoln. Cooperative Extension Service.
SPONS AGENCY Extension Service (DOA), Washington, D.C.
REPORT NO NCE-4-H-326
PUB DATE 88
NOTE 40p.; For project units on "the infant," "the toddler," and "the preschooler," see PS 019 931-935.
PUB TYPE Guides - Classroom Use - Instructional Materials (For Learner) (051) -- Guides - Classroom Use - Teaching Guides (For Teacher) (052)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Elementary Secondary Education; Guidelines; Instructional Materials; *Learning Activities; *Observation; *Play; Student Projects; Toys; Units of Study; *Young Children
IDENTIFIERS *4 H Projects

ABSTRACT

Part of a series for 4-H members between 9 and 19 years of age, this age-graded guide to the development of 6-, 7-, and 8-year-olds aims to help 4-H members who are children and adolescents themselves: (1) understand the physical, mental, social, and emotional development of children in middle childhood; (2) learn to care for a child in middle childhood and promote feelings of security and safety; and (3) choose types of play that are appropriate for such children. Contents include suggestions on projects that 4-H members may undertake, information on individual development, an observation form, guidelines on caring for a child in middle childhood, a discussion of ways young children learn in play, and guidelines for evaluating toys. Sources of additional help with projects are listed. A "leader's guide" for both the middle childhood and preschooler units is appended. (RH)

**********
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
**********

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)
X This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.
• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

Nebraska Cooperative Extension 4-H 326

# 4-H CHILD DEVELOPMENT

# MIDDLE CHILDHOOD

Connie M. Francis
Extension Family Life Specialist

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
Dept. of Agriculture
TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

PS 019035

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

# Middle Childhood: 4-H Child Development

## Project Planning and Evaluation Sheet

Name_____Age (Jan. 1) _____ Year _____

Years in 4-H _____ Name of Club _____

Signature of Leader or Parent _____

| I plan to do these activities: | From this activity I learned: | Comments: |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | | |
| 2 | | |
| 3 | | |
| 4 | | |
| 5 | | |
| 6 | | |

Presentations or community service activities:

# MIDDLE CHILDHOOD

## 4-H Child Development Project

**Connie M. Francis**
**Extension Family Life Specialist**

Welcome to the 4-H Child Development Project. This project is written in four separate parts:

**The Infant (Birth to 18 months)**

**The Toddler (18 months to 3 years)**

**The Preschooler (3 to 6 years)**

**Middle Childhood (6 to 8 years)**

You have chosen to study middle childhood. The objectives of this unit are to:

- Understand how children in middle childhood develop physically, mentally, socially and emotionally.
- Learn how to care for a child in middle childhood and promote feelings of security and safety.
- Choose types of play appropriate for middle childhood.

The amount of responsibility you will have for caring for a child in this project depends on your age. Your age also will determine how you will study the child in middle childhood. The next page has some ideas about what you may do in this project.

# PROJECT SUGGESTIONS

**9-11 years old**

Because you are very young, we suggest you do not take a babysitting job to complete this project. You may choose to observe and help with your younger brother, sister or cousin, or a child in your neighborhood. You will feel more comfortable learning about children in middle childhood if an adult is with you at all times.

In this project you may choose to:

- Plan and prepare nutritious snacks with a young child.
- Have a child tell you a story, then tell the child a story.
- Play board games with a 6- to 8-year-old.
- Play active games with a young child.
- Make a toy or game for a child in middle childhood.

In a notebook or journal, write down what you learn about middle childhood as you observe and do the activities in the project.

**12-14 years old**

If you and your parents feel you are capable of taking care of a 6- to 8-year-old by yourself, you may babysit as you complete this project.

In this project you may choose some of the following activities:

- Observe 6- to 8-year-old children. Notice the activities they enjoy. Watch them on the playground. Get permission from the teacher to observe them in a classroom.
- Ask your mother or father what you were like as a 6-, 7-, and 8-year-old. How did you change when you started school? Who did you play with? What can you remember about yourself at those ages?
- Take a 6-, 7-, or 8-year-old on a nature walk.
- Help a group of children form a club, make up a secret code or create a secret language.
- Make a toy or game for a 6- to 8-year-old.

In a notebook or journal, write down what you learn about middle childhood as you observe and do the activities in the project.

**15-19 years old**

You may select learning experiences from the suggestions for 9- to 11-year-olds and 12- to 14-year-olds. In addition, do some reading and write a short paper on a specific aspect of middle childhood. Select a topic of interest to you such as preparing children for school, education of handicapped children, social development in middle childhood, after school care or latchkey children.

In a notebook or journal, write down what you learn about middle childhood as you observe, do outside reading, and complete the activities in the project.

Investigate recreation programs, day care and after school care, and other activities for 6- to 8-year-olds in your community.

Explore careers working with the middle childhood ages, such as after school care, teacher or playground supervisor. Look for opportunities in your community to work with children ages 6 to 8 — child care facilities, after school programs, youth organizations, community service projects, Big Sister/Big Brother, etc.

# UNDERSTANDING MIDDLE CHILDHOOD 2

In this project, "middle childhood" means 6-, 7- and 8-year-olds. Starting school is a big step for children in this age group. During the first years of school, children become more independent of their home and parents and develop additional ties to school, friends and other adults.

In school, children develop new skills, meet new people, and begin to understand more about themselves. Their interests move beyond their families into friendships, clubs and school activities.

Peanut butter and jelly sandwiches, riddles, cloud-watching, eager adventures and secrets with a "best friend" are typical preoccupations of middle childhood.

By the age of eight, boys usually prefer to play with boys and girls with girls. Groups of children spend their time together in a wide variety of activities. Boys and girls this age enjoy cooking with an adult or teen, playing house, painting, drawing or dancing. They may be active in sports or spend all afternoon in the backyard pretending to be famous explorers.

Handicapping conditions (mental, physical and emotional) become more apparent when the child starts school.

To help you understand how children in middle childhood develop mentally, physically, socially and emotionally, observe a child and fill in a chart like the one on the following page. You may want to copy this form and put it in your journal.

By observing the same child two or three times during your project, you can notice how he or she has changed. Observing more than one child of similar ages will help you see how individual children develop at different rates.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

# OBSERVATION FORM: MIDDLE CHILDHOOD

Name of Child _____ Date _____
Age____ Boy____ Girl____ Weight____pounds; Height____inches

*(Write YES or NO in each blank)*

**Physical development**

____uses small muscles (fingers, hands, eyes)
____uses large muscles (arms, legs, neck)
____pedals
____balances
____climbs
____throws
____catches
____kicks

**Mental Development**

____is able to read
____is able to write
____understands time
____can follow directions and rules
____can classify and sort items
____speaks clearly
____can carry on a conversation with someone older
____uses mathematical skills like adding and subtracting

**Emotional Development**

____overall a happy child
____shows signs of jealousy
____shows feelings of love
____shows anger
____shows concern for feelings of others
____sticks with a task and completes it

**Social Development**

____friendly to you
____friendly to strangers
____gets along with other children
____knows difference between right and wrong
____takes responsibility for simple jobs
____has positive attitudes
____can make decisions
____acts independently
____respects rules
____can share and take turns
____cooperative

If you have additional comments about any of the observations above, record them in your journal. You may want to compare height and weight of the child you are observing to other children of the same approximate age.

# I AM IN MIDDLE CHILDHOOD

This is how I grow during middle childhood:

**Physically I:**
- grow slowly and steadily in height, weight and strength.
- become more aware of what I can do with my muscles and body.
- develop skills such as roller skating, riding a bicycle and climbing trees.

**Mentally I:**
- develop more adult-like thinking skills such as learning to read, write, add and subtract.
- begin to understand the basic difference between right and wrong.
- understand the reasons for rules and learn to respect rules as a way for everyone to be treated equally.
- work very hard to finish projects and reach goals.
- like to collect things that are interesting to me.
- learn to organize and classify my collections, at least by age 8.

**Emotionally I:**
- become aware of how I feel about myself.
- giggle a lot.
- can be angry, frightened and frustrated.
- get jealous, excited and show feelings of love.
- gain self-confidence each time I do what I set out to do.
- can be very critical of myself if I fail. You can help me cope with failures by holding and hugging me, listening to my disappointments and encouraging me to try again.

**Socially I:**
- learn to make friends and often spend as much time with them as with my family.
- begin to cooperate and share.
- love rituals, jokes, riddles, games, tricks, superstitions and secret passwords. These activities may seem silly, but they help me form friendships and feel that I belong to a group.

# CARING FOR A CHILD IN MIDDLE CHILDHOOD 3

Middle childhood is a busy time. Children this age are learning many new skills, and they still need guidance from someone older. Sometimes children get so involved with friends that they forget about school assignments. Sometimes they are impatient when they want attention and need to be reminded that other people are busy, too.

Remember, each child is unique and will develop at his or her own rate. However, the list below gives approximate ages at which skills develop during middle childhood.

**Physical Skills**

Children 6, 7, and 8 years old like to help, but there are several reasons why they won't always do what you want them to do. For example:

- **6-year-olds**

— can be bossy and give lots of advice. They like things to go their way and can throw tantrums or stubbornly refuse to participate when they are disappointed.

— may be clumsy or be dawdlers. If they are in the middle of something they want to do, it may take a long time before they get around to doing what you want them to do. On the other hand, they usually want their needs met right away and get upset when you don't drop everything in order to give them attention.

— can be sensitive and feel ashamed of their mistakes and fears. They are often careful to hide their tears and may shy away from people who they think might criticize them.

- **7-year-olds**

— are uncomfortable with criticism and failure. Many of them would rather quit than not be able to do a job "right."

— are eager to take on duties and to be part of the family, but they will want to be shown what to do. Be prepared to answer many questions like "What do we do now?" and "How do I do this part?"

— want you to show them how to do things and will want you to stay close at hand while they work so you can praise them for each little part they complete.

- **8-year-olds**

— are bored with jobs they already know how to do and will want to help only if the jobs are new and challenging to them. They are usually most interested in jobs they have seen adults doing.

— dislike being alone and like to be active. They will often help with jobs so they can enjoy another's company.

— wonder how people feel about them. They may ask questions like "Do you think I'm a good helper?" and "Do you like me better when I help you make lunch?"

You can help children in middle childhood learn new skills by:

1. Encouraging them to complete activities. If the children you care for have chores at home, it's important that you encourage them to complete those jobs. When children were 4 or 5, they needed to be encouraged to **begin** jobs and projects. Now, when they are 6, 7, and 8, they need encouragement to **complete** jobs and projects.

2. Allowing children to work at their own pace. In middle childhood, children often do not finish puzzles, art creations, homework and games as quickly as older people would like them to. If you give them the time and space to finish projects at their own pace, children will feel proud of their accomplishments and be eager to work on similar projects without the fear of criticism.

3. Being patient, understanding and encouraging.

4. Letting children make some mistakes. It is important you encourage children to try new things and then to praise them for trying, not for how well they did. Children need to feel that duties, jobs and projects do not have to be perfect in order to be "right."

ACTION IDEA

To practice what you've learned in this section, do one or more of the following activities:

- Make a list of all the household tasks you think 6- to 8-year-olds can do. Then make a second list of jobs they should not or cannot do.

- With your 4-H group or some friends, role play the following situation: You have asked your 6-year-old friend to set the table for the two of you while you fix lunch. Your friend has never set the table before and makes many mistakes. Discuss how the child can learn from mistakes, and how you might have changed the situation by giving simple directions.

**Mental Skills**

Six- and 7-year-olds learn by watching and imitating older people, and then trying their ideas to see what happens. For example, at 6 and 7, children watch an adult driving a car and think that it's easy. They may believe they could drive a car too, because they do not understand all steps involved in driving safely. They may even believe that a car can think and that if they tell the car where to go it will take them there. Of course, if a young child ever tried to drive a real car, the results would be disastrous.

Sixes and sevens do not think like adults. They believe the moon follows them as they walk because when they look up it is always there. They also believe that dolls can talk and that a long skinny piece of clay weights less than the same piece of clay rolled up into a ball.

By age 8, however, children begin to think more like adults. They are still far from reasoning like grown-ups though.

Eight-year-olds can understand that a ball of clay weighs the same no matter what shape it is. They can put objects in order according to size, shape, number and value. They still are distracted by ideas that do not make sense to them. For example, if you asked an 8-year-old to find the answer to a math problem like "If a three-headed fish flew five miles one day and six miles the next, how far would it have flown?" they would become more concerned over the fact that there are no three-headed fish or that fish do not fly than over the answer to the problem.

You can help 6-, 7- and 8-year-olds develop their thinking skills by:

1. Listening, talking and giving children honest answers to their questions, and encouraging them to experiment with new ideas.

2. Playing games that will help them develop their thinking skills. Children

in middle childhood enjoy word rhyming, counting, matching and sorting games, especially when you play with them! Board games are fun, too. At 8 years old, children probably can play games like Monopoly as well as you (even though they may sometimes "forget the rules" so they can win). If cheating becomes a problem during a game, remind them of how you feel when someone cheats at a game, and ask them not to do it again. If you praise them often for what they do well they won't have to cheat in order to get your attention.

3.Reading books and taking turns telling each other stories. Children 6, 7 and 8 years old have vivid imaginations and good memories. Their stories can be exciting and lifelike. They may enjoy writing down their stories and drawing pictures to go with them.

ACTION IDEA

To practice what you have learned about development of mental skills ask a friend who is in middle childhood to do one of the experiments on page 14 of this manual with you. Notice how their reasoning skills may affect what they see.

**Social Skills**

Children in middle childhood make many friends, but they also change friends often. Lots of tattling on and putting-down of other children goes on because being friends with another child seems more exciting when a third child is "kept out." This behavior often seems mean; yet, it is a way for young children to learn about relationships. If Nick says, "Ronny's dumb" and others agree with him, his confidence increases. If, however, his friends disagree and defend Ronny, Nick may quickly change his mind so that he will be included in the group.

At 6, 7 and 8 years old, children are learning to create a world of their own away from adults. They do this by forming secret clubs, writing secret codes and playing games they learn from other children, like hopscotch and marbles. During these ages, boys begin to play more with boys and girls with girls. Belonging to a group often becomes so important that children who are different (disabled, gifted, foreign and even rich or poor) often are ignored, kept out or called names.

Along with making friends, children are developing a need for privacy and independence. It is important for them to have doors and drawers they can lock, and to have secret boxes and containers in which to keep their treasures. Many 7-year-olds, especially, are very sensitive about their bodies and do not like to be touched or seen without their clothes.

You can help middle childhood children grow socially by:

1.Respecting their privacy and allowing them to do as many things as possible on their own.

2.Respecting their friends. You may not always like what children say and do when they are with friends, but it is important to remember they are experimenting with social roles. If a child calls you a "dummy," it is okay to tell the child that you do not like to be called that and that it hurts your feelings. On the other hand, if you hear a child call a friend names, try to let the children work it out among themselves without interfering. This is how they learn what is okay and not okay in relationships. If

name-calling causes a heated argument that looks like it might turn into a fight, you will need to step in and prevent anyone from getting hurt physically.

3.Realizing that middle childhood is a time of competitiveness, especially when children are around age 8.

4.Remembering to use your sense of humor. If you can remain cheerful with children, they will be drawn to you and be more likely to want to please you. Your time with them will be more fun, too.

ACTION IDEA

The following activities will help you practice what you have learned in this section on social skills in middle childhood:

•Discuss with your 4-H group or some friends how you can help 6- to 8-year-olds make friends, or help them deal with being called names or being hurt by other children.

•Observe a group of two or more 6- to 8-year-olds on a playground or other situation and notice how they relate to each other.

• Help a 6- to 8-year-old cover a shoe box and decorate it as a special place to keep his or her secret things.

**Emotional Skills**

There are three major outward "pushes" that happen during middle childhood. These three "pushes" are:

• the move away from home and into the world of school and friends.

• the move into physical and social games, sports, duties and work.

• the move into more adult-like ways of thinking.

This can be a scary time for children. Every day they find themselves in new situations.

At 6 to 8 years old, children begin to worry about things they have never worried about before. If a friend's parents divorce, Sally worries that hers might divorce too. If a cousin's puppy dies, Ryan is afraid his cat may die, too.

Children are growing emotionally during this time. They have felt emotions like fear, anger and joy before, but now they are beginning to learn how to express these emotions. They are learning to tell friends when they are mad at them and to tell you how much they like you.

At this age, children are not yet old enough to understand life from another person's point of view. If children this age hurt your feelings, it is hard for them to imagine how they would feel if they were in your place. They don't really understand what it means to apologize or to explain themselves. By age 8, children understand that others might feel differently from themselves. Thus, they can be more cooperative in games and projects.

Middle childhood can be a joyful time for young children as long as they have someone who will listen and tell them that all of their feelings are okay.

You can help children in middle childhood deal with their emotions by:

1.Encouraging them to use words to describe how they feel, and to use words to tell playmates, their parents and others what they like and don't like. Sometimes they get so mad they hit or punch their friends instead of telling them why they are angry. For example, when Sara was asked to "use her words" to tell Ben why she punched him, Sara was reminded to say, "I don't like it when you call me a dummy, Ben!"

2.Giving them positive attention. This means talking, playing, reading or singing with them when they are behaving the way you want them to behave. If you only talk to (or yell at) them when they are misbehaving, you are teaching them to do things wrong in order to get your attention.

3.Showing them your emotions. When children see that adults, teenagers and older children feeling happy or sad, or getting angry, they learn that having feelings is okay. Children learn by watching and imitating older people. If you say crying is bad, children may begin to believe that it is. That would be sad for all of you because crying is a normal, healthy way to express deep feelings.

ACTION IDEA

To practice what you've learned about emotional development in middle childhood, do some role playing with your 4-H group or some friends. Here are some ideas for role-play situations:

- Two 7-year-olds are calling another playmate names.

- An 8-year-old's "best friend" gets mad and goes off to play with another child.

- A group of 6-year-olds are playing a game when another child comes along and asks to be included.

Now you know some things about how children grow during middle childhood — physically, mentally, socially and emotionally. You will probably find that you have questions about 6-, 7-, 8-year-olds that are not answered here.

If you have questions, ask you 4-H leader or moms and dads you know. You may find that there is more than one answer to your questions. That's okay. Everyone has their own way of caring for their children. They may even care for each of their children differently.

Read library books and magazines about young children, too. They may offer you some more suggestions and ideas.

# LEARNING BY DOING 4

Here are some activities to try as you learn about children in middle childhood. Choose the ones that seem to fit the child or children you are spending time with.

• Observe children in middle childhood.

Use the Observation Form on page 6 of this manual. Notice the activities they seem to enjoy and how they talk and play with friends.

You can observe children anywhere. Playgrounds, churches and children's homes are the easiest places. Perhaps you could even get permission from your teacher and a young child's teacher to watch them in their classroom at school. Record your observations in your journal.

From your observations, do you think the children you know feel good about themselves? Write down what you **think** the children would say if you asked them, "What do you think of you?" Now **ask** the children, "What do you think of you?" and write down their answers. Are their answers different from yours or the same?

• Interview parents of 6-, 7- and 8-year-olds.

Ask them about the new skills their children have learned in school, what their children's favorite games are and what they like to do together as a family. You also might ask about their children's home chores, personalities, fears and friendships.

From what you have read in this manual, can you guess how old the children are just by how they are described?

Talk with your mother or father about what you were like as a 6-, 7- and 8-year-old. How did you change when you started to school? Who did you play with and what were your friends like? What can you remember about yourself at these ages?

• Read books to learn more about children in middle childhood.

• Make a poster or other display that explains an important fact you have learned about early middle childhood.

• Give a talk or demonstration to your 4-H club or to another group showing how to do an activity with a 6-, 7- or 8-year-old.

**Play in Middle Childhood**

Try some of the activities below with the 6-, 7- and 8-year-olds you know. You probably will have other ideas, too. Write about your experiences in your journal.

• Help 6- to 8-year-olds form a club, make up a secret code or create a secret language.

• Take a nature walk.

Be sure to get permission from the child's parents if you are going anywhere besides the backyard. While you are on the walk, ask the children what they see, what they smell and what they hear. Sometimes we are so busy thinking about where we are going that we forget to notice the wonderful sights, smells and sounds around us.

Be careful not to damage any living things while you are on your walk. It is also a good idea not to pick flowers. Leave them for the next walkers to enjoy.



BEST COPY AVAILABLE

•Create an Idea Box for outdoor play.

Children 6, 7 and 8 years old spend most of their days inside when they are in school, so they have a lot of "stored-up" energy to release. This energy can be put to good use when groups of children play games, care for pets or take part in sports.

When children run out of ideas of their own, use supplies from your Idea Box to teach them how to:

— set up an obstacle course,
— make a tent over the picnic table,
— make a bird feeder from an empty milk carton, or
— play marbles on the driveway.

Your box also could include things like jump rope or chalk for drawing a hop-scotch layout.

Think of other ideas you can use with young children outdoors and include necessary supplies in your Idea Box.

•Put together a Prop Kit for indoor play.

This kit could include materials needed for

— make believe plays,
— art activities,
— music and dances,
— story times, or
— games.

Use your own ideas for other props to include in your Prop Kit. Be sure the items you include are safe for and interesting to 6-, 7-, and 8-year-olds. Take the kit with you when you care for children.

•Make a Sheet City.

Get permission to use an old sheet and spread it out on the floor or driveway.

Give each child a felt tip marker and work together to draw a town or city on the sheet. You may want to draw the basic outline of the streets, city blocks, downtown or countryside before you give it to the children. They can add houses, special buildings, railroad tracks and drawings of animals and people.

Once the city is completed, toy cars can be driven on the streets, small dolls can live in the houses and plastic cows can graze in the fields.

•Test children's thinking skills.

Here are some experiments to help you test a child's thinking skills.

*** With the child watching you, fill a small measuring cup with water and pour into a tall, thin glass. Then fill the same measuring cup again with the same amount of water and pour the water into a larger, wider glass.

The water level will be much higher in the tall, thin glass, although both will contain identical amounts of water.

Ask the child which glass has the most water in it. Younger children, 6- and early 7-year-olds probably will say that the tall, thin glass has more water in it. Late 7- and 8-year-olds will probably know that the glasses contain the same amount of water.

*** Take two groups of six pennies each and place one group very tightly together in a straight line. Spread the other group of six pennies out over an area the size of a dinner plate (illustration, p. 15). Ask the child which group contains the most money.

Younger children will think the group that is spread out has more money, while older children will understand that both groups contain the same amount.

*** Start with two balls of clay, each the size of a golf ball.

While the child watches, take one of the balls and roll it into a snake or cigar shape. Ask the child which one contains the most clay.

Older children will know that the amounts are still the same, but younger children will think that the snake shape contains more clay because it covers more area.

As you collect play articles or make toys for children in middle childhood evaluate each one using the "Guide for Evaluating Toys" on the next page. If the article meets the requirements of a suitable toy, then you may let a child play with it.

# GUIDELINES FOR EVALUATING TOYS

| Superior | Excellent | Good | Fair | Poor |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | |

**Originality**

Creating and constructing imaginative toys can be an opportunity for you to express your knowledge and CREATIVITY.

1. Shows evidence of originality in design.
2. Exhibits unique use of available and inexpensive materials.
3. Is a creative adaption of an existing idea.

| Superior | Excellent | Good | Fair | Poor |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | |

**Safety**

Toy should be designed so that the child can use the toy safely.

1. Is free of sharp or pointed edges.
2. Has been put together so that there are no exposed straight pins, sharp wires, rails, etc.
3. Is made of a material other than glass or brittle plastic.
4. Non-toxic paint has been used on toy.
5. Is free of parts which deliberately pinch fingers or toes, or catch hair.
6. Is free of small detachable parts that can lodge in the windpipe, ears or nostrils.
7. Is of a material which would be difficult to bite into and/or swallow.
8. Cord or string is no longer than 12" in length.

| Superior | Excellent | Good | Fair | Poor |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | |

**Appropriate for the Child's Age & Development Skills**

Toys are the child's tools for learning and are part of a rich learning environment. Toys should be appropriate and usable at each age level.

1. Attracts the child's attention and interest.
2. Stimulates the sense (color, texture, shape).
3. Enhances intellectual development.
4. Is a versatile toy--can be used in a variety of ways.

# GUIDELINES FOR EVALUATING TOYS

**Promotes Growth & Development**

Toy should be age specific.

1. Can be used by the child when playing alone as well as with another person.
2. Encourages interaction between the child and other people.
3. Helps in developing large muscle skills (example: running, walking, sitting on).
4. Promotes the development of small muscle coordination (example: dressing, drawing, lacing).

| Superior | Excellent | Good | Fair | Poor |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | |

**Quality of Construction**

The toy should be able to withstand the rigors of child use.

1. Is durable.
2. Buttons, trims, and other parts are well-fitted and securely fastened.
3. Sewing is well done and secure.
4. Is washable.
5. Has been carefully and attractively constructed.
6. Rough edges and corners are smooth.

| Superior | Excellent | Good | Fair | Poor |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | |

**Completeness of Exhibit**

Statement about toy should contain the following components:

1. How the toy/game will be used by the child.
2. Materials from which toy is made.
3. Statement about washability.
4. Description of the type of paint used.
5. Skills the child will develop from playing with this toy.
6. Origin of the idea. (Identify if made from a kit or pattern.)
7. If the exhibit is a game, include instructions.

| Superior | Excellent | Good | Fair | Poor |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | |

## More Play in Middle Childhood

Here are some more ideas for activities you may try with a group of 6- to 8-year-olds:

**Body Trace** (This activity helps children see that they are a special and unique person.)

**Materials needed:**
- One body-length piece of paper for each child
- Lots of markers
- Space to spread out

**Directions**: Divide the children into pairs and have them take turns tracing each other on the paper. Then tell the children to color in their tracings. Let them color any way they choose — any way is the right way.

**Discussion**: You might say something like "Let's look at all the body pictures. I can see many things that are the same and many things that are different. Who can tell me what is the same about each of the pictures and each one of us? What is different about each one of us?

"Now I want to go around the circle and have each of you tell me one thing you like to do. Let's try to have each person think of something different. I'll begin. I like to _____."

**Conclusion**: "Now we can see that in some ways we are all the same and in other ways we are different. We are all special in our own ways."

**Fruit Salad** (This activity helps children learn about sharing.)

**Materials needed**:
- Several different kinds of fruit. Use one less fruit than child. (For example, if you have five children, use four kinds of fruit.)

**Directions**: Sit in a circle. Place the fruit in a bowl in front of you. Starting with one child, ask which fruit he or she wants. Then give him or her the chosen fruit. Of course, one child will not get any. You might say, "Oh dear, Linda didn't get any fruit! We'll have to start again." Collect all the fruit and repeat the process, starting with a different child each time. Do this until all the children have been left out once. You might then say, "We have a real problem here. We are hungry and we all want fruit, but we don't have enough! What can we do?"

Hopefully one of the children will come up with the idea of sharing. If not, you may have to suggest it. The next problem becomes how to share the fruit. Discuss some different options with the children. (For example, all the people who want the apple can share it. However, then the apple eaters get less fruit than the others.) Ask for the children's ideas. We hope someone thinks of making a fruit salad so the fruit will be shared by all and everyone gets the same amount.

After the solution is reached, make a fruit salad, eat, and enjoy!

**Note**: When making the salad, allow the children to help as much as possible. Have them wash their hands first.

**Paper Plate Faces** (This activity helps children learn that their feelings are O.K.)

**Materials needed:**

- Paper plates
- Yarn
- Markers/crayons
- Construction paper
- Popsicle sticks
- Scissors
- Glue

**Directions**: Have the children draw faces on at least two paper plates each. The faces should show feelings such as happiness, sadness, anger, fear, etc. Use construction paper and yarn to make hair, hats and faces.

Let children use their imaginations. Tell them they will use the faces in a game when they finish.

Glue a popsicle stick on the bottom of each face as a handle.

**Discussion**: Have the children hold up what they think is the feeling that matches each situation. There are no right or wrong answers. Different children will have different feelings.

Say, "You may use your faces to show how you feel. Remember, this is your feeling and others may feel differently. Feelings are O.K.!"

Read the following statements or make up your own:

How do you feel when someone says you are not nice?

How do you feel when someone scolds you?

How do you feel when someone smiles at you?

How do you feel when someone says "I like you"?

How do you feel when you tell your mother you love her?

How do you feel when you are invited to a party?

**Role-Playing** (This activity helps children learn about positive ways to show emotions or feelings.)

**Directions**: Children love to pretend. They are naturals at it and if given a pretend situation can usually take over. They may need some help to get started and some examples of what to say or do, but encourage them to think of their own ideas, too.

Some children do not enjoy participating in role-playing but like to watch and talk about it. This is perfectly okay.

Three role-playing situations are listed below. They could help you talk with the children about different ways to express feelings. Read each situation out loud and talk about the different feelings one might have in these situations. Emphasize positive ways to deal with feelings.

Let the children choose a part and act it out. Be encouraging and make suggestions, but let the children feel it is their "play."

Situation 1 - The Accident

You have just fallen off your brand new bike and hurt your arm. Your dad thinks you should go to the doctor to have it checked. You don't want to go. To make matters worse, the wheel on your new bike is bent. You go to the doctor's office and she says your arm is broken and must be put in a cast. How do you feel? What do you do?

Situation 2 - The First Day of School

You have just moved into a new house in a new town and today is the first day of school. Your big sister is excited about going to school and making new friends. You don't want to go to school. Your mom doesn't understand why you don't want to go. How do you feel? What do you do?

20 BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Situation 3 - The Babysitter

Your mom and dad are going away for the weekend. Your baby sister and you are staying home with a babysitter. You have never met the babysitter. While you are talking to your mom, he arrives at the door. How do you feel? What do you do?

**Mini Pizzas** (This activity lets children practice making decisions.)

**Materials needed:**

- English muffins (1/2 muffin for each child)
- Prepared pizza sauce
- Grated cheddar cheese and mozzarella cheese
- Cooked meat toppings such as hamburger, sausage, pepperoni, Canadian bacon
- Vegetable toppings such as mushrooms, green peppers, onion, tomato slices
- Juice, milk or water for drinks

**Directions**: Before the activity, prepare the ingredients and arrange in bowls. Give each child a muffin half. Tell the children they may choose only three toppings for their "mini pizzas." Let them know that later you will explain why they can have only three toppings.

After the toppings are arranged, bake mini-pizzas at 350 degrees for 4 - 6 minutes. Eat and enjoy!

**Discussion**: Say, "Today we have been making choices. Does anyone know what it is called when we choose? It is a decision when you choose between two or more things. We make decisions all day long about all kinds of things." (Give examples of choices you have made today such as what to wear, what to eat, etc.)

"Do you remember when we chose three toppings to make our pizzas? Learning how to make decisions is important. Let's go around the circle and talk about why each of you chose the pizza toppings that you did."

Children may need prompting. They may have chosen because they liked the taste, it is their favorite color, their friend chose it, or it was in the bowl closest to them, among other things. Remember that the reason they give is not important; the fact that they made a decision is.

# FOR MORE HELP WITH YOUR PROJECT

- Ask your parents
- Ask your leader
- Read the 4-H project manual for "The Sitter"
- Refer to the following Fact Sheets (available at your Extension office):

FL24 When Your Child Starts School
FL25 Free or Low Cost Activities for Family Fun
FL30 Rejoicing Together
FL40 Toys and Play for Young Children
FL45 Your Child from Six to Twelve
FL50 Babysitting
FL52 Self-Esteem: Our Gift to Children
FL80 Read to Your Child

Special acknowledgement to Jeanette Friesen, Extension Agent-Home Economics; Virginia Gobeli, Extension Specialist - 4-H; Herb Lingren, Extension Family Life Specialist; and Pat Steffens, Extension Family Life Specialist for their contributions in developing and reviewing this project.

Materials were adapted from those prepared by Colorado State University Extension.

# SUMMARY OF PROJECT

Issued in furtherance of Cooperative Extension work, Acts of May 8 and June 30, 1914, in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Kenneth R. Bolen, Director of Cooperative Extension, University of Nebraska, Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources.

Cooperative Extension provides information and educational programs to all people without regard to race, color, national origin, sex or handicap.

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

X This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

Nebraska Cooperative Extension 4-H 327

# 4-H CHILD DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS LEADER'S GUIDE

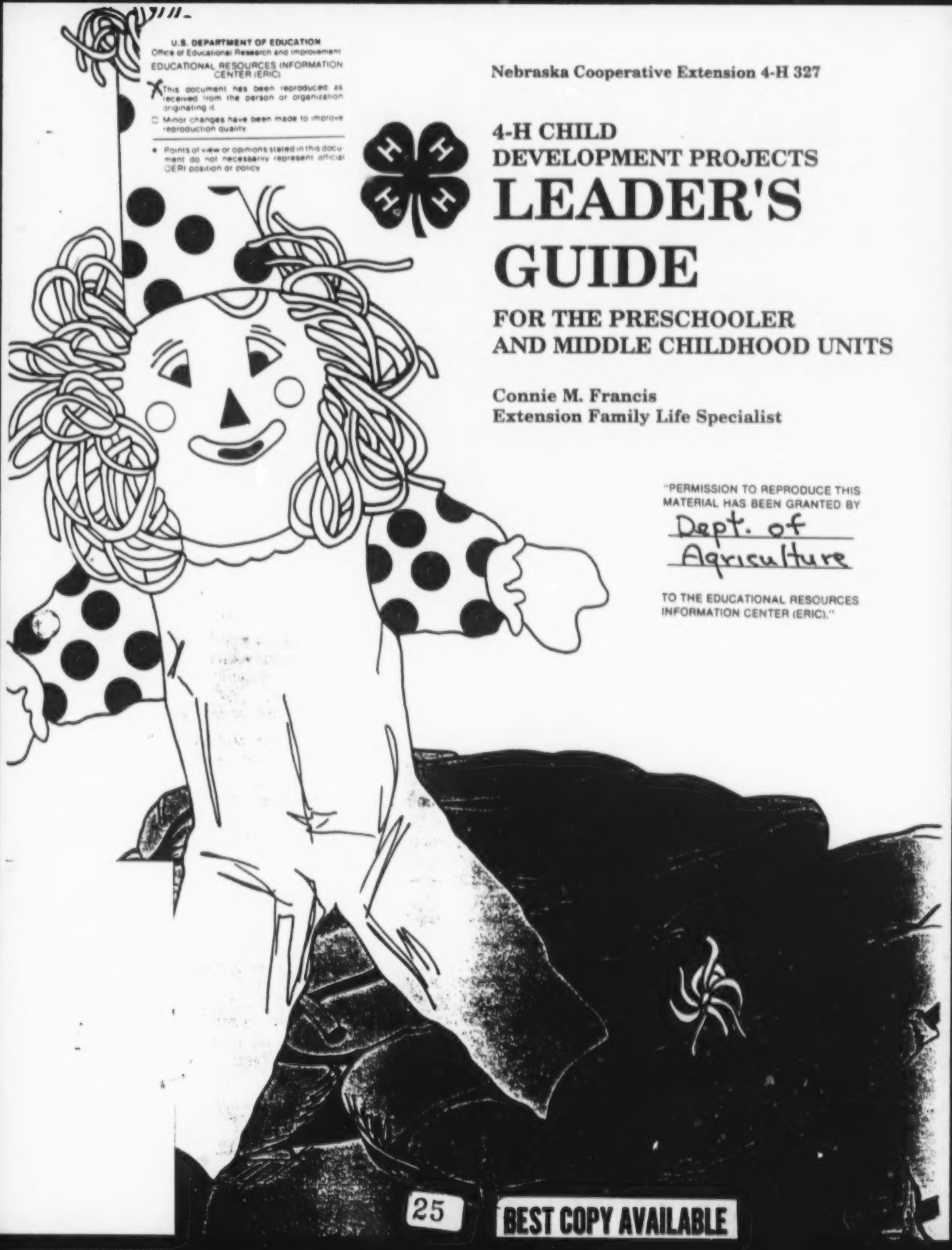
## FOR THE PRESCHOOLER AND MIDDLE CHILDHOOD UNITS

**Connie M. Francis**
**Extension Family Life Specialist**

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Dept. of Agriculture

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."





BEST COPY AVAILABLE

# 4-H CHILD DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS LEADER'S GUIDE for the PRESCHOOLER AND MIDDLE CHILDHOOD UNITS

**Connie M. Francis**
**Extension Family Life Specialist**

## INTRODUCTION

The 4-H Child Development project is written as four separate units:

**The Infant (birth to 18 months)**

**The Toddler (18 months to 3 years)**

**The Preschooler (3 to 6 years)**

**Middle Childhood (6 to 8 years)**

Each unit teaches about the physical, emotional, social and intellectual growth of a particular age group. Four-H'ers do not have to begin with the infant unit and proceed through the units in order. They may choose to begin with any unit they wish.

The goals of the 4-H Child Development Project are:

- To understand how children grow physically, mentally, socially and emotionally from infancy through middle childhood.
- To learn how to care for children from birth through 8 years.
- To choose appropriate types of play for each age level.

Your role as a leader is to help 4-H'ers meet these goals.

This Leader's Guide is designed as a tool for you. It will help you plan learning experiences for 4-H'ers studying "The Preschooler" (3 to 6 years) or "Middle Childhood" (6 to 8 years) in the 4-H Child Development Project.

As you read the member's manual, you will get ideas for learning activities and experiences that will help 4-H'ers gain an understanding of the developmental levels through which children grow. One of the best learning experiences a 4-H'er can have in this project is to observe more than one child of similar ages. This helps the 4-H'er realize that, although there are levels through which all children progress, each is unique and each proceeds at his or her own individual rate. Children who are mentally, emotionally or physically handicapped will progress at a slower rate in some areas.

Encourage 4-H'ers to discuss project plans with their parents and involve them in the project. You, as the Child Development project leader, can involve parents in many ways, too. For example, they can have meetings in their homes, be involved in teaching, help with transportation for a field trip, etc. Parents may have talents to share that can help 4-H'ers learn more from this project.

The 4-H Leader Handbook (4-H 38) is a guide to help leaders work with young people and to link them to the community and to the Extension Office in their area. In the handbook, there is information on understanding 4-H, involving parents in 4-H, holding effective meetings, understanding youth and helping 4-H'ers with project records. Refer to the 4-H Leader Handbook for areas in which you would like help.

# WORKING WITH YOUNG PEOPLE

Most young people within an age group have some of the general characteristics typical of the age and developmental stage. However, each child develops at his or her own pace and each is a unique individual. Below are typical characteristics of two age groups with which you will be working. You are likely to observe many of these characteristics in your 4-H members, but you will not find all of them in any one member.

**Characteristics of 9- to 11-year-olds:**

- Interest in making things is high.
- Large muscle control is fairly well developed.
- Fine finger control is beginning to develop.
- Peer group is of increasing importance.
- Independence from adults is important.
- Have limited decision making abilities.
- Have abounding energy.
- Find it hard to sit still for very long.
- Need to experience early success.
- Need to feel loved and accepted.
- Attention span is good for short periods of time.
- Active participation increases attention span.
- Searching for self-identity and need assistance in building a strong sense of positive personal confidence.
- Need help managing their time.

**Characteristics of 12- to 14-year-olds:**

- Steady height and weight growth continues.
- Small muscle control is fairly well developed.
- Abstract thought is possible, and plans can extend over several weeks.
- Activities can be evaluated with considerable insight.
- Attention span increases.
- Need self-expression and self-directed activities to develop intellectual skills.
- Need to know and understand the "why" of things.
- Peer group is very important.
- Prejudice may be apparent.
- Both cooperation and competition are enjoyed. Cooperation is more difficult to learn than is competition.
- Independence from adults is important.
- Concept of self is enhanced by feelings of competence.

# RESPONSIBILITY OF THE 4-H LEADER

1.Attend leader training meetings when possible to receive information on teaching 4-H'ers.

2.Plan meetings for project members.

3.Explain what the project can offer. Encourage 4-H'ers to pursue areas of individual interest and share their findings with others.

4.Help individuals evaluate their projects.

5.Encourage participation in presentations and exhibits to gain poise and confidence.

6.Learn and grow with the members. Broaden your own knowledge in child development.

7.Ask your Extension Agent-Home Economics for help in getting bulletins and other materials and resources listed in this guide.

# A 4-H PHILOSOPHY

Much of the 4-H program centers around one major learning technique - the project. A project is a real-life learning experience through which the 4-H member establishes personal objectives, sets out to accomplish these objectives under adult guidance, and actually finishes the job. Projects help members learn by doing and are planned to teach life skills. These skills will help 4-H'ers function as adults in our society and accept responsibilities for community leadership.

Life skills help young people and adults fulfill their potential as individuals and group members. The life skills learned in 4-H include:

- understanding self,
- relating with others,
- communicating,
- decision making/problem solving,
- acquiring, analyzing and using information,
- managing resources, and
- working with others.

In the 4-H Child Development project, 4-H'ers will learn and practice these life skills. As a leader, you can encourage 4-H'ers to talk about and share what they observe and do, both formally and informally. Urge them to experiment, ask questions and try new things. Give them opportunities to identify problems and attempt solutions, to set goals and make choices, and to evaluate what they have learned. In this way, you will help them develop life skills which will be useful to them long after they have completed this project.

# PLANNING THE PROJECT MEETING

On the following pages are suggested activities for club meetings. It is not necessary to complete all the activities and exercises. Select the ones that interest you and your club members the most. You will have additional ideas of your own, as well.

Get members involved early in the meeting through roll call, reports of what they have done since the last meeting, simple demonstrations, short talks and actual activities. Provide some opportunity for recognition of and participation by every member at each meeting.

Field trips add variety to a club program. For the convenience of everyone concerned, make arrangements for trips well in advance. Talk to the person in charge about what you want members to learn and see, their interest and age range, the time of your arrival and departure, and anything else that will make the visit worthwhile for 4-H'ers and pleasant for the host.

Involve Junior Leaders as well as 4-H parents in club meetings. Ask them to demonstrate a skill, assist with a group activity or help individual 4-H'ers.

Take some time at your first meeting to organize. Introduce the project to members and their parents. Explain the project and, if possible, give examples of what is included in some of the units. Discuss keeping a journal to record project experiences and observations.

# THE PRESCHOOLER

This unit of the Child Development project is about the development of preschoolers from 3 to 6 years. In it the 4-H'er will observe and learn about the physical, emotional, social and intellectual development of preschoolers. It is important to remind members that each child is unique and will progress through these stages at an individual rate. Ages given for various stages of development and accomplishment are approximate ages.

For more information about the development and care of preschoolers, refer to the following Fact Sheets available at your Extension office:

- FL21 How Young Children Learn
- FL23 The Preschool Years - Three to Five
- FL26 The Three-Year-Old
- FL27 The Four-Year-Old
- FL28 The Five-Year-Old
- FL40 Toys and Play for Young Children
- FL52 Self-Esteem: Our Gift to Children
- FL80 Read to Your Child

The following 4-H publications also may be useful:

- 4-H 181 Communicating with Young Children
- 4-H 267 The Sitter, Member Manual
- 4-H 268 The Sitter, Leader Guide

The amount of responsibility a 4-H'er takes for actual care of a child in this project depends on the 4-H'er's age and experience. **The member's manual has project suggestions for members in three age groups: 9 to 11 years old, 12 to 14 years old, and 15 to 19 years old.**

# UNDERSTANDING THE PRESCHOOLER

Purpose: 4-H'ers will learn how a preschooler grows physically, mentally, socially and emotionally.

**Meeting Suggestions:** (This section may involve two or three meetings.)

**Roll Call Ideas:**

- Why I have chosen to study preschoolers.
- An experience I have had with a preschooler.
- One thing I know about preschoolers.
- Ask each member to bring a picture of themselves as a preschooler.

**Topics to Talk About:**

•Characteristics of preschoolers. Review "I Am A Preschooler," page 8 in the member manual. Explain to 4-H'ers that developmental materials are generalized information to help us see the various stages through which a child moves. It is important to realize that each child develops at his or her own pace.

•Observing preschoolers. Refer to the Observation Form on page 6 in the member manual and discuss skills preschoolers learn in each area: physical, social, intellectual and emotional. Encourage members to observe as many preschoolers as possible during this project.

•Keeping a journal. Encourage members to keep a Child Development journal in which they record their observations. A loose-leaf notebook would allow 4-H'ers to duplicate the Observation Form and make several observations throughout their project. This journal also may include a record of other experiences in the project as well as pictures and newspaper or magazine articles about the development and care of preschoolers.

**Activities:**

•Use project suggestions on page 4 of the member manual. Discuss what each member would like to learn and do. Complete the first column of the Project Planning and Evaluation Sheet together (page 2, member manual).

•Make a journal entry as a group. In it record your plans for the project year.

•Using the Observation Form provided on page 6 of the member manual, have members record:

— changes in one preschooler over a period of time.

— differences between two or more preschoolers of approximately the same age.

Have members include these observations in their journal.

•Visit a local day care center or preschool where 4-H'ers can observe more than one preschooler. Each member could select two children of the same approximate age and note similarities and differences in physical, emotional, intellectual and social development. Have members record what they see on Observation Forms. Encourage 4-H'ers to ask questions of the day care provider or preschool director. (You may want to have members prepare a list of questions together ahead of time.)

•As a group, list some "don'ts" that members have used with preschoolers. Practice restating them as "do" statements.

# CARING FOR THE PRESCHOOLER

Purpose: The 4-H'er will learn how to feed, clothe and care for the preschooler, and how to promote feelings of security and safety.

**Meeting Suggestions:** (This section may involve two or three meetings.)

**Roll Call Ideas:**

- One safety rule for caring for a preschooler.
- A snack idea that preschoolers could fix for themselves.

**Possible Presentations by Members:**

- Nutritional needs of a preschooler.
- Nutritious snacks for preschoolers.
- Clothing for a preschooler.
- Teaching a child to tie shoes.

**Topics to Talk About:**

- Feeding a preschooler. Discuss nutritional needs and how they change as a preschooler grows. Also talk about providing a relaxed atmosphere at mealtime and beginning to learn table manners.
- Clothing a preschooler. Clothing features that make dressing easier for preschoolers.
- Quiet activities that can help prepare a preschooler for nap or bedtime.

**Activities:**

- Invite a guest speaker to attend your 4-H meeting. Before the speaker arrives, develop a list of questions you would like answered. Ideas for guest speakers include:
  — a preschool teacher to talk about the daily schedule and activities at a preschool or running a preschool as a business.
  — someone from your local Head Start to explain the Head Start program.
- Visit a store where preschool clothing is sold. Look at sizes, age ranges and features that would be attractive to preschoolers. Note construction details and care labels.
- As members develop skills in caring for a preschooler, and as they learn through observations and other experiences, encourage them to share what they have learned. This sharing may be done informally, through group discussion, or through formal presentations such as demonstrations, speeches, posters, reports or exhibits.
- As a group, or for an individual assignment, have members plan one day's menus for a preschooler.
- Role-play talking with a preschooler about table manners. Discuss or role-play ways to introduce new foods.
- Gather a variety of clothing fasteners — zippers (large and small), buttons, snaps, hooks, gripper strips, etc. — and discuss which would be easier for a preschooler to manage and how they can be used to make clothing easier for the preschooler to put on and take off alone.

# LEARNING THROUGH PLAY

Purpose: 4-H'ers will learn to choose types of play preschoolers enjoy and toys that are suitable for preschoolers.

**Meeting Suggestions:** (This section may involve two or three meetings.)

**Roll Call Ideas:**

- Your favorite toy as a preschooler.
- Name a toy a preschooler would enjoy.
- A safety tip for playing with a preschooler.
- An idea or picture of a preschooler's toy I could make.

**Possible Member Presentations:**

- Selecting or making a toy for a preschooler.
- Teaching a game or a song to a preschooler.

**Topics to Talk About:**

- Types of play which encourage a preschooler's physical, emotional, social and intellectual development.
- Preschoolers and make-believe. Use the section on Imaginative Play, page 11 in the member manual, as a discussion guide.
- What makes a good toy for a preschooler? Use the section on "Toys for the Preschooler," page 16 in the member manual, as a discussion guide.

**Activities:**

- Collect four or five toys for preschoolers. Ask members to evaluate each toy in regard to quality of construction, safety and appropriateness for use by a preschooler.
- Invite a librarian to attend your meeting and talk about books for preschoolers. The librarian could also share ideas about telling stories.
- Ask each member to bring a short children's book to your meeting and practice telling the story rather than reading it.
- Learn some finger plays and action songs that members can share with their preschool friends. (See page14, member manual.)
- Ask each member to bring supplies needed to make a drop box or other toy for a preschooler. Make the toy at your meeting. You may want to enlist the help of one or two junior leaders or parents.
- Ask members to keep a journal. By observing a child at play a 4-H'er can learn a great deal about what the child is thinking and feeling. Encourage members to write in their journals about what they observe.
- Complete Project Planning and Evaluation Sheet found in the front of the member manual. Encourage members to record what they learned and comments about each activity.

# AN ACHIEVEMENT MEETING

If possible, share the achievements of the members in this project at a final club "achievement" meeting. This would be an ideal time to invite families to learn about what members have done.

An achievement meeting could include an exhibit of members' work, displays or posters showing things learned, presentations by members, and sharing of observations about the growth and development of preschoolers.

# MIDDLE CHILDHOOD

This unit includes information about development in middle childhood. In it 4-H'ers will observe and learn about the physical, emotional, social and intellectual development of 6- to 8-year-olds. It is important to remind members that each child is unique and will progress through these stages at an individual rate. Ages given for various stages of development and accomplishment are approximate.

Erik Erikson*, who studied human development, believed that people learn certain lessons and gain certain skills according to their age and stage of growth. He divided the average lifetime into eight stages and suggested eight major lessons to go with each of these stages. The lesson he identified for middle childhood was industry versus inferiority.

Erikson believed that children in middle childhood are learning about the value of work and about the confidence they gain when they know they have done a job well (industry). He also believed that children who don't feel good about their accomplishments or who never learn to finish projects or jobs won't feel good about themselves (inferiority). He stated that children's main needs during these years are for achievement, acceptance by friends and important adults, and a sense of self-esteem.

Children 6, 7 and 8 years old, he said, are at the beginning of this stage and are excited about doing. acting, exploring, daring, experimenting, inventing, building and completing their projects. Duties at home, school assignments and other projects provide children with opportunities to commit to tasks. Successful completion of these tasks helps them feel good about themselves.

For more information about the development and care of children in middle childhood, refer to the following Fact Sheets that are available at your Extension office:

- FL24 When Your Child Starts School
- FL45 Your Child From Six to Twelve
- FL52 Self-Esteem: Our Gift to Children
- FL80 Read to Your Child

The following 4-H publications also may be useful:

- 4-H 181 Communicating with Young Children
- 4-H 267 The Sitter, Member Manual
- 4-H 268 The Sitter, Leader Guide

The amount of responsibility a 4-H'er takes for actual care of a child in this project depends on the 4-H'er's age and experience. The member's manual has project suggestions for members in three age groups: 9 to 11 years old, 12 to 14 years old, and 15 to 19 years old.

---

*Sue Bredekamp, ed., DEVELOPMENTALLY APPROPRIATE PRACTICE IN EARLY CHILDHOOD PROGRAMS SERVING CHILDREN FROM BIRTH THROUGH AGE 8 (Washington, D.C.: National Association for the Education of Young Children, 1988), pp 64-65.

# UNDERSTANDING MIDDLE CHILDHOOD

Purpose: 4-H'ers will learn how children grow physically, intellectually, socially and emotionally during middle childhood.

**Meeting Suggestions:** (This section may involve two or three meetings.)

**Roll Call Ideas:**

- Why I have chosen to study middle childhood.
- Ask each member to bring a picture of themselves in middle childhood.
- Name a 6- to 8-year-old you know and tell something about him or her.

**Topics to Talk About:**

•Characteristics of children in middle childhood. Review "I Am In Middle Childhood," page 7 in the member manual. Tell 4-H'ers that developmental materials are generalized information to help us see the various stages through which a child moves. It is important to realize that each child develops at his or her own pace.

•Observing middle childhood-age children. Refer to the Observation Form on page 6 of the member manual and discuss the skills learned in middle childhood in each area: physical, social, intellectual and emotional. Encourage members to observe as many children in middle childhood as possible during this project.

•Keeping a journal. Encourage members to keep a Child Development journal in which they record their observations. A loose-leaf notebook would allow 4-H'ers to duplicate the Observation Form and make several observations throughout their project. This journal also may include a record of other experiences in the project as well as pictures and newspaper or magazine articles about the development and care of children in middle childhood.

**Activities:**

•Use project suggestions on page 4 of the member manual. Discuss what each member would like to learn and do. Complete the first column of the Project Planning and Evaluation Sheet together (page 2, member manual).

•Make a journal entry as a group. Record your plans for the project year.

•Record observations. Duplicate the Observation Form provided on page 6 of the member's manual and have members record:

— changes in one child over a period of time.

— differences between two or more children of approximately the same age.

Have members include these observations in their journal.

•Take field trip. Visit a local day care center where 4-H'ers can observe more than one child in middle childhood. Each member could select two children of the same approximate age and note similarities and differences in physical, emotional, mental and social development. Have members record what they see on Observation Forms. Encourage 4-H'ers to ask questions of the day care provider. (You may want to prepare a list of questions together ahead of time.)

# CARING FOR THE CHILD IN MIDDLE CHILDHOOD

Purpose: The 4-H'er will learn skills to encourage the 6- to 8-year-old child's physical, emotional, intellectual and social development.

**Meeting Suggestions:** (This section may involve two or three meetings.)

**Roll Call Ideas:**

- A new skill which 6- to 8-year-olds may be learning.
- A play idea for 6- to 8-year-olds.

**Possible Member Presentations:**

- Nutritional needs in middle childhood.
- Simple snacks to make with 6- to 8-year-olds.
- Activities to encourage thinking skills.

**Topics to Talk About:**

•How children change physically during middle childhood. Discuss skills that are developing at this age.

•Thinking skills that develop in middle childhood. Share ways to encourage development of these skills.

•Changes that take place in relating to others during middle childhood. Discuss methods that help 6- to 8-year-olds develop social skills.

•Discuss emotional development in middle childhood and ways in which 4-H'ers can encourage emotional growth in children with whom they associate.

•Discuss handicapping conditions, how they affect a 6- to 8-year-old and how 4-H'ers can encourage a handicapped child.

**Activities:**

•Invite a guest speaker to attend your 4-H meeting. Before the speaker arrives, develop a list of questions you would like answered. Ideas for guest speakers include:

— a teacher who works with 6- to 8-year-olds.

— a librarian to talk about story-telling and books appropriate for middle childhood.

— a mother to tell about growth and development of her child in middle childhood.

— a handicapped adult to share experiences of middle childhood years.

•As members develop skills in caring for a child in middle childhood, and as they learn through observations and other experiences, encourage them to share what they have learned. This sharing may be done informally through group discussion, or through formal presentations such as demonstrations, speeches, reports, posters or exhibits.

# LEARNING THROUGH PLAY

Purpose: 4-H'ers will learn to choose types of play that children in middle childhood enjoy and what toys are suitable for 6- to 8-year-olds.

**Meeting Suggestions:** (This section may involve two or three meetings.)

**Roll Call Ideas:**

- Name a toy that a 6- to 8-year-old would enjoy.
- An idea or picture of a toy I could make in this unit.
- Share an action song I know.

**Possible Member Presentations:**

- Selecting or making a toy for a 6- to 8-year-old.
- What I have learned as I have observed 6- to 8-year-olds.

**Topics to Talk About:**

- Types of play that encourage physical, emotional, social and intellectual development in middle childhood.
- Articles that might be included in a "care kit" for children in middle childhood.

**Activities:**

- Collect four or five toys for children in middle childhood. Ask members to evaluate each toy for quality of construction, safety, appropriateness for middle childhood, and how well it would encourage imaginative play.
- Visit a store where toys are sold. Compare toys suggested for 6- to 8-year-olds with what members have learned about skill level of this age group. Ask members to write a report about what they learned.
- Keep a journal. By observing a child's imaginative play a 4-H'er can learn a great deal about what the child is thinking and feeling. Encourage members to write in their journals about what they observe.
- Complete the Project Planning and Evaluation Sheet found at the front of the member manual. Encourage members to record what they have learned and comment about each activity.

# AN ACHIEVEMENT MEETING

If possible, share the achievements of the members in this project at a final club "achievement" meeting. This would be an ideal time to invite families to learn about what members have done.

An achievement meeting could include an exhibit of members' work, displays or posters showing things learned, presentations by members, and sharing of observations about the growth and development of children in middle childhood.

# REFERENCES

"4-H Good Times with Early School-Age Children", Leader's Guide, Colorado State University Cooperative Extension

Bredekamp, Sue, ed. DEVELOPMENTALLY APPROPRIATE PRACTICE IN EARLY CHILDHOOD PROGRAMS SERVING CHILDREN FROM BIRTH THROUGH AGE 8. Washington, D.C.: National Association for the Education of Young Children, 1988.

Savery, Millicent. EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION: LEARNING EXPERIENCES FOR THE 3-, 4-, AND 5-YEAR-OLD CHILD. 2nd rev.ed. Lincoln: Nebraska Department of Education, Division of Instructional Services, 1979.

## A Guide to Children's Toys

Children's rates of growth differ widely, but the sequence of the development is similar. The following guide is not a timetable. It shows a progression in which each new skill adds to and builds on the mastery of the ones before.

| STAGES | EMERGING SKILLS | TOYS THAT ENABLE | WAYS TO ENCOURAGE |
|---|---|---|---|
| ENJOYMENT OF THE FAMILIAR<br>(birth to about 6 months) | recognition of faces<br>anticipation of sequences<br>discovery of own body (hand, mouth and vocal play)<br>staring and listening intently<br>learning they can cause things to happen | stuffed toys with faces<br>reflective surfaces, toys to hold, suck, shake<br>crib decorations, music box<br>mobile that moves as a result of baby moving in bed | make faces<br>ritual games (pat-a-cake)<br>think safety in toys that go in mouth<br>sing/talk to baby<br>react |
| GETTING AROUND<br>(about 6 mo. to 12 mo.) | action—crawling, standing, walking<br>manipulation with hands and mouth<br>sense of self as doer<br>rhythm of absence/presence | things he/she can crawl under, get inside<br>toys for banging, inserting, twisting, pushing pulling, dropping, squeezing, opening, shutting<br>jack-in-box, toys which hide and reveal | gentle rough housing<br>think safety on anything that can go in mouth<br>knee, lap games, tug-o-war<br>peek-a-boo, hear-a-boo |
| EXPLORING<br>(about 1 to 2 years) | mobility—use of body<br>exploration and testing of relationships (objects as well as people)<br>look for something that's gone<br>imitation<br>making decisions—choice<br>language | wheel toys, push/pull toys, ball<br>construction toys for putting together, taking apart, blocks, containers for emptying and filling, things to throw<br>simple, sturdy books and pictures | chase and be chased<br>finger and hand games<br>hide and find things<br>pretend |
| DESIRE FOR MASTERY<br>(about 2 to 3 years) | testing surroundings and physical ability<br>exploration and construction<br>self mastery, desire to do it alone<br>performing<br>pretending<br>sustain play in small groups | pedal toys, punching toys<br>sand and water toys<br>drawing materials, water-soluble paints, block, play dough, pasting, puzzles, threading, lacing<br>puppets, books, records | switch roles<br>act out stories, tell stories<br>be an audience<br>help pretend<br>follow the leader, ring games (around the rosy) |
| MAKE BELIEVE<br>(about 3 to 4 years) | construct toy worlds<br>portray characters with feelings<br>sort and match<br>take turns, play cooperatively, make rules<br>music and rhythm<br>physical exploration | toy house, village, farm, etc.<br>dress up and make believe props for self, toys and dolls<br>blunt scissors, easel, clay<br>records, books on fantasy, familiar places and rhythms<br>simple music and rhythm instruments | participate in make believe<br>hide and seek |
| LEARNING ORDER<br>(about 4 to 5 years) | differentiate order/disorder<br>differentiate inclusion/exclusion<br>desire for courage and adequacy<br>establish play rituals<br>have secrets and surprises<br>act out imaginary characters | tinker toys, lego and other detailed construction toys<br>simple card and board games | provide place to keep toys orderly<br>play games of courage<br>allow some privacy |
| THE DREAMER<br>(about 5 to 7 years) | dream—think of "what if" situations<br>elaborate toy worlds<br>begin collections<br>team play<br>chasing and escaping<br>attack and defense<br>sense of self as separate person | comics and books, paper dolls<br>magnets, compass, magnifying glass<br>simple craft kits—weaving, sewing, construction kits<br>simple tools for clay, etc.<br>rope ladder, skates, stilts<br>two wheel bike | play "what if" games<br>improvise movements, objects, characters, situations, feelings<br>provide safe place to store collection<br>referee |
| ENJOYMENT OF THE ABSURD<br>(about 7 to 9 years) | guessing, riddling<br>develop pastimes—collections, hobbies<br>desire for correctness—no mistakes | card and board games<br>dominoes, checkers<br>mechanical, simple construction tools for woodworking, crafts, etc.<br>jump rope, stilts | play with double meanings<br>indulge nonsense<br>show your skill |
| DESIRE FOR COMPETENCE<br>(about 9 to 13 years) | concern with opinions of others<br>sense of self and feelings as unique<br>concerned with success/failure | intellectual games (scrabble, charades)<br>models<br>diaries, journals, notebooks<br>camping and exploring equipment<br>more complex craft tools | dramatize imaginary interactions, conflicts<br>ask about experiences, feelings<br>encourage creative writing<br>play sports<br>allow privacy |



BEST COPY AVAILABLE